

BOARD OF HEALTH PRESENTATION
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My wife and I moved into a new house on BI just over a year ago.

We noted a metallic taste in our water.

Analysis: Metallic Nickel in water from 5 faucets plus metallic lead and copper in one of those faucets.

All these metal levels exceed Washington State reporting levels for drinking water.

One faucet is leaching 18 times the state reporting level for nickel and all heavy metal contamination is above the maximum contamination level allowed in safe drinking water.

Discovery of these levels of heavy metals in drinking water requires immediate reporting to the Department of Health, because heavy metal contamination is a known cause of cancer.

There are two reasons that heavy metals are in our drinking water.

First, the water supplied to our home from a Department of Health regulated public system is “aggressive” or “corrosive”.

This means that the water attacks and dissolves metal in household plumbing, releasing those metals into the water.

We have searched extensively and have not found any home water treatment system that will make water less corrosive.

I contacted the Department of Health team that monitors the South Bainbridge Water System and found that the system is “in compliance” with state requirements and there is nothing they can do to relieve our problem.

I also sought help from Representative Phil Rockefeller’s office and from the State Board of Health.

It is because of these contacts that I am here today.

The second reason heavy metals are in our water is that the five affected faucets in our home are not fully certified to meet manufacturing standards that prevent such corrosion.

I have had extensive contact with the manufacturers of our faulty faucets and have received no help or cooperation whatsoever from them.

It is clear that they are aware of the problem, but they depend on lack of public awareness to protect them.

Faucets can be manufactured to standards that resist this corrosion, and some ethical manufacturers such as the Grohe Company are meeting this standard.

The problems we have encountered represent a little-known public health problem that is probably wide spread.

I have found that plumbing contractors and distributors are amazingly unaware that this problem exists.

Here is what I think state law makers can do to help:

1. Make the public aware of this problem. All public water systems send a Water Quality Report to their customers annually. This report should include a water corrosivity index measured by a certified laboratory and should describe problems associated with corrosive water.
2. Current practice allows commercial water systems to select homes where samples are taken for testing. The method of sample selection should be scientifically based and samples drawn by an independent agent such as the Health Department.
3. Washington law should require that all new plumbing fixtures sold fully meet the most recently established manufacturing standards.
4. Plumbing supply distributors should not be allowed to sell outdated plumbing stock that doesn't fully meet current standards that prevent leaching of metals into drinking water.

Mr./Ms Chair----- Unless you have questions, this completes my statement.

Cost of new faucets: \$2972 plus installation @ \$75 per hour.

Health Costs? Tommy's liver carcinoma